

RollPlay

GM

NOTEBOOK
ISSUE 9

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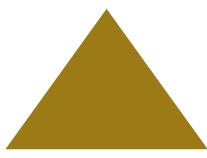
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Welcome, Patrons!

This month we're going to do a little dive into the lore and background of the worlds of Court of Swords and Nebula Jazz. I wanted to talk about some of the stuff that fills the space between episodes and where I draw from when I'm improvising or setting up stuff for our cast to undertake. This is real GM notebook stuff, some of which has been in the notebook for a while and some which I've added as the episodes have gone on. In a way, this will be some of the proto-campaign setting stuff for both shows. If you're looking to run your own game in the worlds of these shows, this is the place to be. Alternately, if you're a lore junkie, you're in the right place. Just to warn you, this is going to be some very spoilery stuff, more so than any other zine so far, because we're really diving deep into the stuff below the surface. Keep in mind, like any piece of mostly "made up as we go along" media, I might change my mind on the details, but as of April, 2017, this is where the settings stand. Hope you dig it!

Thank you so much for your support, and welcome to Issue 8 of the GM's Notebook.

Adam Koebel / RollPlay GM

THE COSMOLOGY OF THE COURT OF SWORDS



There aren't many ways in which the Court of Swords' cosmology matches that of the usual D&D setting. As far as I'm concerned, there's really just the one universe - no multiversal metalayered planar landscape exists in this setting. If you summon a fey crocodile, it comes from the nature of the world itself, rather than from, say, "the Feywild" or wherever fancy-pants sparkle crocodiles live. That's not to say that there aren't cosmologically significant locations in the world, but that if you know the

right route, you could theoretically walk yourself into Heaven or blunder into Hell, if you had the right vehicle to do so.



The World We Know

Let's talk about the Prime Material, shall we? In most ways, this place is just like it is in any other setting. Up

is up, down is down, rain is wet and fire is hot. All the usual rules apply to the “world” of Court of Swords. Weather, land masses, etc. all function, from a human perspective, the way we expect them to. They’re just there, doing their thing, the laws of physics. The world itself is a globe, like ours, and if you sail north of the Court of Coins’ most northern outpost, you’ll find yourself at the southmost territories of the Court of Swords. In the west, the deserst and mighty cities of the Court of Wands and in the east, the great expanses of sea and islands that make up the Court of Cups.

There are places, in the world, that are older or newer - in the sense of having been discovered or rediscovered more or less recently. The Xulin Valley, for example, is very old but only recently really a focus for anyone’s attention. The beings that once ruled over the land known as the Courts spent a great deal of time and energy in that place, and when they went away, it was mostly forgotten. The world is a very large place and even though the Four Courts have done a fine job dividing it, there’s always nooks and crannies where things get forgotten. This is where all the best treasure inevitably ends up.

The natural laws of the world around our characters are seemingly governed at random - the ocean currents have their way, the seasons come and go, five to a year, as expected, the river flows, the rain rains. Thing is, there’s a force that decides and manages that chaos.

Heaven

Heaven is glorious. Heaven is perfect. Heaven is where the Great Bureaucracy of Spirits dwells. It’s a shining golden city full of parks and rivers, that stretches for a hundred miles in every direction, beautiful and perfect, surrounding the Palace of the Court of Heaven from whence the Fountain flows. All manner of bureaucrats live in this place, spirits whose purview covers all of creation - every stream, every raincloud, every city has a spirit and if they do not dwell in Heaven then they can be found on earth doing their duty. This animistic protocol manages all the world, even though only few humans (mostly Druids and their ilk) are even aware of it, having instead codified the pure power of the Fountain into the Arcana, for the purposes of understanding. Let it be clear, there are no spirits of the Arcana - the “will of the gods” is simply a facet of the will of the Fountain. Humans are

funny creatures, and when they'll get the joke of their own religion is a matter of much debate in Heaven. The Tian Shi (or Aasimar, if you like) are born and dwell here, their human souls having ascended the cycle of reincarnation (which is real, even if The Wheel is not) and been polished clean. Well, for the most part. Some of them are forced to go on assignment, down to earth. They're seen with a mixture of pity and admiration, much like the janitor whose job it is to clean the mess you dare not touch.

Heaven is a place one can travel to, with either the correct magic or the right permit and a means to go there, though its gates throughout the world are guarded by fearsome creatures. It is not impossible, by any stretch of the imagination, that we might see the hallowed streets of Heaven in the game sometime.

Remember, Heaven is not a place the dead go; a sacred city yes, but no home for souls undone from their body. They are judged by karma in the halls of balance within heaven, and reassigned by the bureaucracy, who are very good at their jobs.

Elsewhere

From whence come the Mara? What of these strange golden-clad creatures some speak of? Where do demons dwell when not in this earth? There are other places, to be sure, but so few know of them - if they exist in Heaven's Department of Divine Cartography, the scrolls are locked away someplace. Perhaps there is a Hell, where the demon princes dwell, tearing apart the souls of bad little boys and girls. Where is the fabled Surgery of the Great Doctor? Or the Hall of the Fallen Dragon? There are myths, but so little is known. It's all guesses, now.



The Gods

There is a source of power called The Fountain. It has always existed. It is metaphorical and literal, a font of pure water and light in the literal center of the universe. All things flow from it and all things return

to its source. There were those born attuned to it, by their blood, by luck, by some other means, who can conjure its light as “spells” and bend the world to their whim. Later, mortals and spirits alike learned to conjure effects of the Fountain’s power by way of incantation and intense study - one might devote ones life to thieving power from the Fountain and using it against the world. This path is hard, and requires a will most lack. So instead, humanity taught themselves a new trick - religion. Instead of devotion to the self, and mastery through that, devotion to an ideal became a means to bend and mutilate the magic of the fountain. Through labour and time, as the Four Courts were formed, so too came the Arcana, the great strange path of birth, death, reincarnation and enlightenment broken and battered into easier shapes. Twenty-two steps to Nirvana. Those devoted to a certain stage became priests, whose devotion to a tiny facet of the Great Wheel game them a kind of power - limited not by their own will (as with Sorcerers and Wizards) but by their perceived limitations - by the ideological shackles they place on themselves.

There are rumors of magic of another kind. Those who bind themselves to other sources than the Fountain, but this is blasphemy most foul. The implications that something else might serve as a source as powerful as the Fountain is an idea that could undo the will of Heaven altogether...



Inspiration

Much of what I wanted to do with the setting of Court of Swords was move away from the usual business - keep to the spirit of allowing whatever is in the D&D books to enter the world, but to do something new and different with what I could control. The first place a GM gets their hands on is the things that populate their world, the things the PCs can choose to be when the game begins. After that, they can look at the larger mythology and magic of the world, building a tapestry to lay behind the adventures of the characters. I’ve always aspired to create a world for whom the most important element is context. Without that, we have



an empty setting, a backdrop with no actors hanging limply against an empty stage. What a sad thought - so instead of preparing the sets before the play, I've let the action dictate what needs knowing in our world. A lot of this means winging it and putting pieces together as I go, weaving the whole out of



smaller parts. I spoke about this in Issue Eight and I really think we're starting to build this whole firmer world, especially with the episodes late in the month.

Lore building is one of my favourite things to do, and I have to be careful to balance it, on-screen, with the actual action that's happening. I have to remind myself that the world is only as important as what happens in it. I hope you've enjoyed seeing the context of the place as much as I have.

If you've got questions about the world, I'd love to hear them - feel free to tweet at me and ask. Even if I don't have an answer, your question might prompt me down an unexpected path, which is the best thing you can do for a GM, if you ask me.

THE COURTS



A History

In the ancient past, there were random, scattered tribes. Humans, mostly, though at this time an ancient and powerful dwarven empire was collapsing unknown in the dark and some say gnomes still frolicked in the woods of the Xulin Valley, at least. These humans served themselves, first, their warlords second, and the Fountain not at all. The seasons came randomly, Fire, then Water, sometimes Earth, Fire again, perhaps three days of darkness as the Void passed over the world. Why this time of chaos existed, no-one knows - the Bureaucracy of Heaven has several thousand-year-old requests for information still pending on these times, and generally it's just considered rude to dig too deep - don't you have a river to flow or a desert to fill with sand?

During this time, there was little more than savagery and war. In the East, the people of the islands suffered from horrible disasters and did battle with great leviathans. In the West, the deserts were full of succubi and plagues. All in all, a terrible time to be a person.

A conclave was called between the most powerful warlords of

each cardinal direction, so that all humanity might be lifted up. Again, speculation as to who called this concord, each Court has legends of their own high part in this drama. In the end, they agreed that it would be best to work together to divide the world. At this conclave, the Arcana were formed, primitive in form, and the Structure of Fours.

To each place, there would be four rulers, as there were four seasons and four Courts. To each Court, Province, Village and Family there would be four to rule. A King and Queen, A Page and a Knight. One to rule with strength, one with heart, one to bring vitality and one to protect. As it is in the highest places, so too the lowest. This is something that the conclave brought to every home in the Courts and is, to this day, an enduring cultural truth no matter where you go.

So it is, today.

The Court of Coins

Called also: the Court of Pentacles and the Court of Earth

While all the Courts have existed precisely as long, the Court of Coins can, in some ways, claim the longest

history. For what is history if it has not been recorded? The Imperial Record of the Court of Coins stretches as far back as any, though direct accounts of the conclave and the formation of the Structure of Fours have all been lost. Indirect accounts show the importance of the Court of Coins in the formation of all the Courts, and it is known among scholars in this largest of Courts that they are the key to that which occurred in the conclave.

The Court of Coins, as Earth Court, is most prosperous materially of all the Courts - it boasts the largest number of banks, trading companies and merchant houses of anywhere in the world. It is the largest Court by size,

bragging a territory twice the size of its neighbors in any direction and several hundred times more land than the Court of Cups, if one doesn't count the empty ocean. There is nothing this Court does not harvest or manufacture, and it contains biomes as diverse as desert, coasts both tropical and temperate, forests, mountains, jungles and valleys. Throughout this land some of the oldest and most prosperous cities can be found, though the honor of largest city in the Courts yet belongs to the City of Brass, in the Court of Wands.



The people of the Court of Coins are varied and their cultures broad to match. Their temperance, practices and desires run the gamut from subdued to boisterous, but among them all a respect for the simpler things - a warm bed, a good meal and a giant pile of gold to sleep on at night. Trade and commerce are the most important thing to the Courts and their roadways stretch all across the world, even unto the coldest, darkest north. The Court of Coins is a peaceful Court, but it is said that they'll buy or sell anything. Slavery is common in this kingdom, and anything is legal, for a price. Even, it is rumored, dark magic.

The Court of Wands

Called also: the Court of Fire, Home of Magic

If you wish to learn, whether of the world around you, the secrets of magic or simply of who you truly are, the Court of Wands is the place to do so. The finest Universities and schools can be found in the hot climes of the west, where desert winds blow through the olive groves. Cities of ancient lineage are built here, many upon ancient tribal sites, and the Court is a place where curiosity - whether of the past, the present or what is to come, is rewarded.

The Court of Wands is home to the largest metropolis in all the Courts - the City of Brass, a magnificent city where anything one desires can be found (and where one can be whoever they desire). Travelling wizards come here to learn at the Library, and scholars, priests and thrill-seekers all make a pilgrimage to the great city at least once in their lives. Little more can match the splendor of this place, nor the legendary beauty of its King, the wisdom of its Queen or the fierce love between the Page and Knight of the place - all of whom were granted immortality by the spirits of heaven



and have reigned over the place for a thousand years.

The Court of Wands is, as her element, a land of eternal change. The literal landscape shifting with the desert as, over the years, cities are swallowed up by sand and others discovered beneath it. The metaphorical, as well - social convention is known to shift quickly here and what might be in fashion today is uncouth tomorrow. The people of the Court of Wands are known to be impulsive and quick tempered, but their culture values loyalty and earnest discussion as well.

There are some who say that the Mara dwell here, in the Court of Wands - that out in the desert they make their home, because the Court of Wands is not vigilant enough to keep them out. There are some, they say, who keep demons as servants or pets, that draw magic from the darkness beyond. Whether this is true, or simply the opinion of the uniformed, is something the Court of Wands continues to tease the world with, unafraid of their reputation.

The Court of Cups

Called also the Water Court, the Archipelagos

Nowhere in the world can you find those more endeared to their families. In the Court of Cups, nothing is more important than who you are related to - your parents and siblings, your grandparents, the lineage of your people. In a land where storms batter even the



largest villages into the sea, blood endures. The dwellers in this Court show homage to their people by etching lines of deeds and history into their skin - rough tattoos and scars crossing muscle and skin with the story of a brave cousin or wily aunt.

Geographically, the Court of Cups is the smallest - hundreds of thousands of islands, some no more than a half mile across, dot this territory. Many of the west-most islands have come in conflict once or twice over their history with Coin or Sword ships that like to act as though they belong to one of the greater Courts, but these are always taught the truth of things when monsoon season comes. The islands belong to the Court of Cups, and always have.

The inhabitants of the island tend away from organized religion, though there are shrines on all the bigger islands to the major arcana. They have, instead, shown a talent for untrained sorcery and the magic of the spirits. Among some of the further islands, necromancy is performed as a form of practical magic, for what use to the dead have for their bodies once they're done with them? There are as many variations to Cups culture as there

are islands, though they all value the "language of the soul" and are a musical, emotive people who show great care in any task they undertake.

It is rare to see a citizen of the Court of Cups on the mainland, though every generation has a few young folks who come to see what life is like on dry land. No Court of Cups child ever goes to sleep without a thought, at least, of the great blue expanse upon which they were born.

The Court of Swords

Called also the Air Court, the Glorious Empire of Chakravartin

A third-child Court, as far as size goes, but as with all little siblings, tenacious for attention and vicious when cornered, the Court of Swords has a rough history. Despite the peace treaties of the conclave, the promise that no war would be made among the Courts, the People of the Sword have made war on their siblings in a number of "border skirmishes" involving towns along all sides of this Court. They are fierce as a cornered badger and always, always hungry for more.



Among the people of the River Lands, from birth a sense of glory and competition is instilled. Everyone learns that their Court is the best Court, the strongest and most wondrous. They learn to talk big, to make good on their ambitions and always to fight. To fight for what they deserve. Conflict and competition make up a huge part of life in the Court of Swords and children learn many games of strategy and sports as they grow, preparing their bodies and minds for the expected time they'll spend in the military before being released into the world.

Complicating life in the Court of Swords is their close proximity to the hill tribes - the last remaining Kingdoms of the Dwarves, with whom they have to share their already limited land - something that the Court uses to justify seizing territory from her neighbors. There just isn't enough room for the growing population, after all.

PEOPLE OF THE COURTS

There are all kinds of people that make up the Court of Swords, and I wanted to take a moment to do a quick once-over of all the peoples that we've seen so far, as well as talk a bit about some that we haven't!

Humans

They're everywhere, and since they're the baseline, humans in our setting are generally defined more by their culture than by their species, though the other races in our setting have their own cultures as well. We've just not been, you know, exposed to them, yet. Humans run the gamut from tall to short, thick to thin, dark to pale, and have

all kinds of thoughts and beliefs.

This is true of everyone else, too. All the other species. It's just that there are, you know, a lot of damn humans.

Dwarves

The second most populous people of the Courts, the Dwarves are a dying breed. Some say dead, in fact. They keep to their halls, but their ruins dot the countryside throughout all the Courts, save Cups. They are known for their magical crafts - most magic that has been bottled, branded, captured or woven has been made by dwarvish hands, and

the loss of these noble people will be tragically felt. What is making the dwarves disappear? A disease? A curse? None are willing to share with the outside world.

Also, they're slavers. Let's not forget that. Half-orcs exist because of them and are slaves because of it, too.

Half-Orcs

A long time ago, there were humans and there were orcs. Neither had much going in the way of intelligence or civilization, but there they were, out in the world, surviving like animals. Dwarves saw this, and were curious. What if they could breed the relative intelligence of humanity with the savage nature of the orc and then, you know, enslave the ensuing result and make them work in the mines for all eternity.

You've just learned the history of the half-orc. They can breed true with each other, with orcs or with humans and produce more of themselves. Technically, they're not human, so they don't have any rights in the Courts. It's a matter of debate, even in Heaven, if they have a soul at all.

Genasi

The Genasi are seen, in most Courts, as a slightly-more-perfect version of humanity. They are blessed by the spirits, having reincarnated as something better than they would have been. They are born to human parents, cannot breed true (except to create human babies with humans or other genasi) and have no culture of their own. Theirs is to sit, blessed and perfect, atop the pyramid that humanity has built for them. Pretty nice gig, if you ask me, though the pressure's often a bit much for them.

Gnomes

I never wanted Gnomes in my setting. I really didn't. I don't really like Gnomes, with their high pitched voices and their shitty inability to fire a bow. Oh well, sometimes you roll with what you've got.

Tian Shi (Aasimar)

You go through the rinse cycle of reincarnation over and over, having your dirty human soul polished and educated, spit back out into the world to learn how to shed karma until one day you don't, anymore. You've made the cut, and are polished to a shine and placed into a heavenly body as a Tian Shi - an

angel. Now you may pass between Heaven and the Courts, but you're tied to the bureaucracy like a spirit might be, given orders by the Will of Heaven and tasked with all kinds of unpleasant stuff. Bet you miss that free will now, don't you?

Yuan-Ti

All I really know is that there used to be a hell of a lot of snake people around, but now there aren't. Well, maybe that's going to change, but they definitely had a bigger place in the world than they do - I'm thinking probably some big empire that challenged the Dwarves. That maybe that's why the Half-Orcs got made in the first place. Who doesn't like a good serpent war, right? We'll see more of these folks and their slumbering deities over time, I'd wager.

Kenku

An old race, older maybe than the Dwarves, they say the Kenku are the earthly children of the God of Ravens - a great spirit that watches over all black-feathered birds. Everything I know about them in the setting so far, we've seen, except that I know they're connected to something old. Something very old, especially in the

Xulin Valley. I'm not sure if Kenku travel elsewhere, but with what JP has told me, sometimes they do - I think there are others like Gale, in the world. Curious in the way that maybe Bilbo or Frodo were, you know? I'm curious to see more, but we might not - I certainly don't have much interest in diluting the cool one-of-a-kind thing that Jubilant has going.

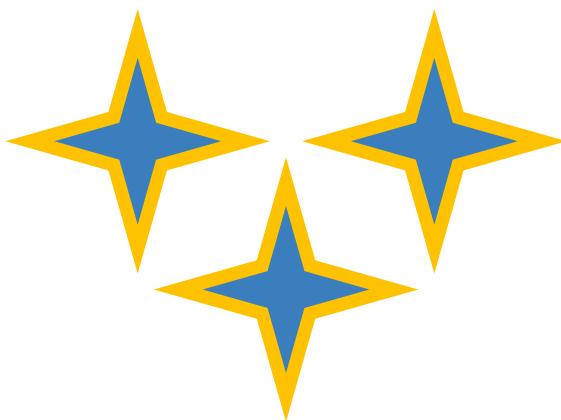
Elves

The less said about them, the better. Trust me on this. Eventually you'll be like "NO PLEASE ADAM STOP IT WITH THE ELVES" and we'll come back here and I'll remind you that I warned you.

Others

Halflings, Dragonborn, Goliaths, Half-Elves, etc will all likely stay in the "do they / don't they" space of my brain until someone wants to play one. Then they'll be really real.

NERVILIA
JAZZ



THE WORLD SO FAR

Here's how the universe of Nebula Jazz shakes out, with a bunch of unknowns because it's more fun to leave questions unanswered than it is to answer it, and yeah there's probably going to be some confusion with the canon here but who is to say I get to decide how things really are, huh?

So, it's probably like, 2002 or so if Earth hadn't been destroyed. That's a best-guess based on how old Aurora is and when Earth got blown up, if we assume that she was taken on the day of the big event. Which was in 1986, right? Earth got blown up and we know that the Elaxetronians had something to

do with it, if not actually pulling the trigger themselves. They're heavily in bed with the Minghassi Imperium, who we know have a hard-on for nuking planets anyway, but I'm not ready to confirm or deny the whole "Minghassi Blew Up the Earth" conspiracy just yet.

The Imperium more or less runs the universe. They've got the biggest warships, the hottest tech and the most attractive leaders. Or they did until someone killed Prince Novarius (before he was eaten by a shark man) and pinned it on the PCs now they've got this Royal Steward stand-in Empire, Duke Mako - the

Prince's Uncle. Has there ever been a "Prince's Uncle Who Took The Throne After a Terrible Accident" who wasn't a total douche? Probably not. Then again, maybe being the Steward just sucks really bad. Ask Denethor about that oh wait you can't he lit himself on fire. Anyway the Minghassi have this special planetary destruction weapon they built with the help of the Elaxetronians (which I hope makes you wonder why they're building it now if they are the ones who destroyed Earth because like, isn't that a "which came first the chicken or the planetary destruction beam" kind of problem?) They need the Aga'ran Scepter of Ascension to power it. Makes sense given the Aga'ran propensity for like, spiky phallic death-dealing devices, right?

The Aga'rans just lost a war and they're all but extinct - an ancient and surly warrior race who seem to have discovered some kind of benefactor and who want the scepter badly enough that they'll send a sacred Huntress after a bunch of no-good losers even though said losers contain the oh-so-

sexy ex of one of said Huntress. Life's complicated out here the Erogenous Zone. The Aga'ran's we don't know much about except they're weird kinky with the rough stuff.

Lastly, even though everyone hates them, we've got Lizard-men - the former glorious Empire of Slynn, laid low by, you guessed it, those loveable robots the Elaxetronians. Boy they sure get around. They're currently led by a big ol' snake lady who has evil magic, but there's a cult of feely feels who think that something called the Blix-nort Lebo'lak'ta is going to save them by teaching their men folk not to bottle up their emotions. Hope you can feel your way out of a Hold Person spell, Qin. That's where we're at, just now. There's a few big mysteries, like what the Scepter is for and who the lady with the cigarette is / was and who is giving the Aga'rans their orders but frankly, that's more fun to show you in the game than tell you about here.

Plus I have no idea what any of it is.

Don't tell the cast.

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SWAN SONG

“For your truth and your answer.”

– Mr. Sicarian

Swan Song: Episode 06

The PCs have arrived, with Dr. Omar Ibn Said, on the planet Subhara. They have the university tech with them, a "pheromone translator" (actually an amplifier for psychic energy intended to access the V2D hive mind). However;

- 1) The Swan Song is out of fuel. Her fuel scoops are broken.
- 2) The research outpost is abandoned and there is significant evidence that it's been attacked.
- 3) The scientists are missing. Dr. Said tells the players that he believes it was a smuggler attack, as the researchers have had "violent altercations" with them in the past.
- 4) The docking bay of the outpost has been more-or-less destroyed. The Swan can't be repaired here...

The Outpost

On approach, it's obvious that the base has fallen under some misfortune; life signs are null, evidence of attack is clear. Ramp up the tension - Omar is terrified and we want the players to feel like there may still be enemies around. Evidence;

- the docking bay has been destroyed, some kind of explosion has rendered it unlandable. A successful Pilot check can find a safe place to land (failure means 1d3 damage to the ship)
- power is completely disabled in the out-post (though backup power may be able to be established if the PCs head to the generator shed and perform some patch repairs)
- evidence abounds of a fight → energy weapons discharged, explosives used, etc. if the PCs investigate closely, they'll see signs of non-human combatants (mostly the yellow-white blood of the V2D)
- just go full-on Jurassic Park/Aliens here (or Starship Troopers, I suppose.)
- Omar refuses to leave the ship until it's safe, and will advise the PCs to find his missing comrades. He holds that the work they were doing is too important to fall into the wrong hands (but will keep the true purpose hidden)
- after 12 hours pass, a group of twelve smugglers come to investigate. They want the doctor and his gear, and will try to seize the Swan Song if they can

Stuff in the Outpost

- medical bay
- destroyed docking bay
- server room
- offices
- living quarters
- cafeteria



- armory (?)
- comms tower (sabotaged)
- supply (ransacked)
- generator shed

Clues to Weirdness

Quetiapine. Gamma
↑ Haloperidol-14

- > MES drugs in the medbay
- > profiles in the computer indicate psychics
- > armory and obvious military presence
- > comms records highly encrypted
- > plans for "human-V2D interface protocols"
- > the device itself = obvious Psi-tech

- the Smugglers in question are humans being influenced by the V2D "hive song" and who work for the slumbering proto-queen. They want to "incorporate" Omar + use the HNR device to awaken her. Creepy!

Swan Song GM Notes

Commentary

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Swan Song: Episode 6

We continue our notes on the whole Subhadra experience. It's funny to me how like, brazen I am about my stealing in these notes - I just straight up remind myself what movies to rip off. It's always kind of fun when people watch something, say Ghost in the Shell or Aliens or whatever for the first time and tweet at me like "I KNOW WHERE THIS THING IN SWAN SONG CAME FROM". It makes me laugh because it's always so obvious to me, you know? We always think we're so obvious and like, yeah sometimes we are but a lot of the time this stuff just flies over people's heads with a little tweaking. It's nice, though, getting called out, or seeing references recognized in chat.

The V'ad

I super wanted the players to discover the truth of what Dr. Said was up to. I wanted so badly, but I did this thing I always promise myself to do in these situations and I didn't meddle. I hate when GMs just dump the big bad in front of you, or make you end up in the room they wanted you to end up in. I had this big cool alien plot thing and never used it, but that's okay, because it made the game feel more authentic, I think.

The Outpost

I know the thing most people think they need to do in games is created detailed maps, and maybe that helps you, but for me, a list of locations is all I need, sometimes (as you'll see next month) what helps is having a flowchart of locations - this place connects to that place, etc. Which really, is all a dungeon or facility map is, right? What space leads to what other space and in what configuration. We don't need anything fancier than that, especially if nobody is going to see it.

“We want the players to feel like there may still be enemies around”

See how even early on, even just in my own notes, I’m talking about you, chat? Swan Song was the first game that was ever a show for me and I internalized the idea of audience-as-participant so quickly. The “we” here always means “me and my buds in chat”. matters is what we see on screen.

A Group of Twelve Smugglers

Enter Rajani Van Dorne, I believe.

Stuff in the Outpost

This is literally as much stuff (plus a bit on the next page) that I need to run a kind of Swan Song Dungeon Crawl. I’ll do it again a few times throughout the show, but just a few lists is what makes Stars Without Number sing. It’s such a fun game, in part because you can be as high or low prep as you like.

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